

MEDIA, PA — Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voiced his continued support for Delaware County and the other petitioners fighting the FAA's flawed airspace redesign project as the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit heard today's oral arguments. The federal court system is only one of the many venues that the Congressman has consistently called for using as part of a multi-pronged effort to oppose the redesign – an approach that offers the Philadelphia region the best chance to obtain the effective, efficient and safe transportation system it deserves.

“Today's court proceedings are one important part of a fight against FAA policies that pose substantial harm to the physical health and economic well-being of my constituents, and do not take into account the possibility of regional and intermodal solutions,” said Congressman Sestak. “Reversing the air space redesign and its companion capacity enhancement program requires efforts at all levels of government. On the local level, we must build on the meeting I participated in with Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and representatives of Delaware County and Tinicum Township where I voiced my strong opposition to the sale of land in Tinicum for an additional runway. Without this land, the FAA cannot proceed with capacity enhancement, which is necessary for the airspace redesign project.

“The GAO found only an 18 second decrease in delays in its study of the redesign, proving that the airport needs this land as part of a redesign that would meet less than 50 percent of Philadelphia's demands in the near term, even with the new runway. That is why I wrote an op-ed for the Delco Times and held follow up meetings with Tinicum officials to urge them not to sell the land.

“We must continue with our multi-faceted approach to appropriately direct FAA funding away from the ill-conceived and costly projects that harm the people of this region, and toward regional and intermodal initiatives. I have worked with Congressman Rob Andrews (NJ-1) to build strong arguments to demonstrate the irresponsibility of the redesign to the next FAA administrator. The GAO (Government Accounting Office) has found that the FAA did not do a cost-benefit analysis before implementing the redesign and the project's benefit would be a savings of only 18 seconds delay for takeoffs and 45 seconds for landings. Furthermore, I have encouraged legal action against the City of Philadelphia for violations of its Noise Compatibility Program as a result of implementing the airspace redesign.

“Moreover, a recently released report by Rowan University has demonstrated the benefits of increasing regional airport use. If we move just 10 percent of Philadelphia's demand to Atlantic

City, the savings are an average of 14 minutes less delay, and the cost is only \$1 million, whereas the FAA plan would reduce delays by only 3.2 minutes in 2011 and ultimately cost more than \$5 billion. As we await the confirmation of the agency's next top official, I have discussed these points with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. We have planned a follow up involving the next FAA Administrator to bring resolution to this matter."

In addition to utilizing all possible venues to work to halt the FAA's project, all substantive arguments must be brought forward. These include points highlighted at today's hearing, such as the redesign's violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Clean Air Act and the wildlife and animal protection portions of the Transportation Act. However, specific, compelling arguments established by the expert panel formed in 2006 to advise the Congressman were not raised. The committee produced a white paper in April 2007, – which was shared with Delaware County – that included studies showing an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and the loss of one year of a student's K-12 education for those living in the areas where aircraft noise is being multiplied to unacceptable levels. Still, the Congressman remains hopeful that these arguments can still be included in overall litigation strategy.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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